Reading for Virginia Educators: Reading Specialist

5304

www.ets.org/praxis
Welcome to the Praxis® Study Companion

Prepare to Show What You Know

You have been working to acquire the knowledge and skills you need for your teaching career. Now you are ready to demonstrate your abilities by taking a Praxis® test.

Using the Praxis® Study Companion is a smart way to prepare for the test so you can do your best on test day. This guide can help keep you on track and make the most efficient use of your study time.

The Study Companion contains practical information and helpful tools, including:

- An overview of the Praxis tests
- Specific information on the Praxis test you are taking
- A template study plan
- Study topics
- Practice questions and explanations of correct answers
- Test-taking tips and strategies
- Frequently asked questions
- Links to more detailed information

So where should you start? Begin by reviewing this guide in its entirety and note those sections that you need to revisit. Then you can create your own personalized study plan and schedule based on your individual needs and how much time you have before test day.

Keep in mind that study habits are individual. There are many different ways to successfully prepare for your test. Some people study better on their own, while others prefer a group dynamic. You may have more energy early in the day, but another test taker may concentrate better in the evening. So use this guide to develop the approach that works best for you.

Your teaching career begins with preparation. Good luck!

Know What to Expect

Which tests should I take?

Each state or agency that uses the Praxis tests sets its own requirements for which test or tests you must take for the teaching area you wish to pursue.

Before you register for a test, confirm your state or agency’s testing requirements at www.ets.org/praxis/states.

How are the Praxis tests given?

Praxis tests are given on computer. Other formats are available for test takers approved for accommodations (see page 51).
What should I expect when taking the test on computer?
When taking the test on computer, you can expect to be asked to provide proper identification at the test center. Once admitted, you will be given the opportunity to learn how the computer interface works (how to answer questions, how to skip questions, how to go back to questions you skipped, etc.) before the testing time begins. Watch the What to Expect on Test Day video to see what the experience is like.

Where and when are the Praxis tests offered?
You can select the test center that is most convenient for you. The Praxis tests are administered through an international network of test centers, which includes Prometric® Testing Centers, some universities, and other locations throughout the world.

Testing schedules may differ, so see the Praxis web site for more detailed test registration information at www.ets.org/praxis/register.
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## 1. Learn About Your Test

*Learn about the specific test you will be taking*

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<th>Reading for Virginia Educators: Reading Specialist</th>
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<tr>
<td>Test Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Questions</td>
<td>100 selected-response questions (Part A), 1 constructed-response question, and 1 case study (Part B)</td>
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<td>Selected-response questions and constructed-response questions</td>
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### Content Categories

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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Oral Language and Oral Communication</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>III. Reading Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>V. Specialized Knowledge and Leadership Skills</td>
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### Pacing and Special Tips

In allocating time on this assessment, it is expected that approximately 120 minutes will be spent on Part A (the selected-response section) and approximately 90 minutes on Part B (about 30 minutes on the constructed-response section and about 60 minutes on the case study). Please note that Parts A and B are not independently timed.
About This Test

The Reading for Virginia Educators: Reading Specialist test is intended primarily for persons who have advanced academic preparation and/or are being considered for supervisory or instructional positions related to the teaching of reading instruction in grades K–12. The test is most appropriate for candidates with advanced preparation (i.e., those with a master’s degree or course work comparable to the training needed for a master’s degree) who expect to have specialized responsibilities related to the teaching of reading at any level from kindergarten through 12th grade. It is also appropriate for individuals who wish to be considered for supervisory or instructional positions related to the teaching of reading—those seeking positions as reading clinicians, consultants, supervisors, specialists, coordinators, or resource persons and thus intending to be responsible for more than the teaching of developmental reading in a regular classroom setting.

This test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.

Test Specifications

Test specifications in this chapter describe the knowledge and skills measured by the test. Study topics to help you prepare to answer test questions can be found on page 40.

I. Assessment and Diagnostic Teaching

A. Understand the characteristics and uses of assessment and screening measures for evaluating students’ language proficiency and reading skills

1. Distinguish between formal and informal assessment and screening measures to evaluate students’ oral and written language proficiency
2. Distinguish between formal and informal assessments and screening measures to evaluate emergent readers’ and beginning readers’ knowledge and skills; e.g., concepts of print, phonemic awareness, letter recognition, sound-symbol knowledge, single-word recognition, and decoding
3. Distinguish between formal and informal assessments and screening measures for monitoring the ongoing development of students’ reading skills and strategies; e.g., word-attack skills, vocabulary, word recognition in context, reading fluency, and oral and silent reading comprehension

B. Understand the use of assessment data to plan reading instruction

1. Describe methods for using assessment data to diagnose the reading needs of, and tailor instruction for, individual students
2. Describe methods for using diagnostic reading data to differentiate instruction to accelerate the development of students’ reading skills
3. Describe methods for using diagnostic reading data to differentiate instruction to address the needs of students with reading difficulties
4. Describe the uses of flexible groupings in instruction to address students’ changing reading needs
II. Oral Language and Oral Communication

A. Understand the development of oral language and oral communication skills

1. Explain appropriate instructional strategies to promote growth in students’ use of oral language, to develop their listening and speaking skills, and to expand their listening and speaking vocabularies
2. Explain appropriate instructional strategies to build students’ oral communication skills, to help students use oral language for different purposes, and to facilitate the use of oral language for critical thinking and creative expression
3. Explain appropriate instructional strategies to promote students’ use of oral and nonverbal communication skills in various settings, including group activities and oral presentations
4. Explain appropriate instructional strategies to promote students’ understanding of oral language structures
5. Explain appropriate, effective methods for facilitating the learning of Standard American English by speakers of other languages and dialects
6. Explain the relationship between the complex nature of language acquisition and the unique needs of students with language delays and disorders
7. Explain how to create a learning environment that is respectful of, and responsive to, linguistic and cultural diversity

B. Understand the development of phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness

1. Describe phonological awareness and effective instructional strategies for promoting students’ phonological association skills
2. Describe phonemic awareness and the role of phonemic awareness in reading development
3. Differentiate types of phonemic awareness skills; e.g., phoneme isolation, identity, categorization, blending, segmentation, deletion, addition, and substitution
4. Describe instructional strategies to promote development of phonemic awareness skills by helping students hear, say, and manipulate phonemes in spoken words containing one or more syllables

III. Reading Development

A. Understand how to promote students’ understanding of concepts of print and basic phonetic principles

1. Describe instructional strategies for helping students learn concepts of print and for beginning to match voice with print
2. Describe ways to promote students’ automatic recognition of high-frequency sight words
3. Describe ways to help students recognize and name uppercase and lowercase letters
4. Describe instructional strategies to promote students’ understanding of basic phonetic principles by helping students grasp the alphabetic principle, match consonant sounds and short vowel sounds to appropriate letters, and identify beginning consonant sounds in single-syllable printed words
5. Explain the relationship between students’ invented spellings and their understanding of phonetic principles

B. Understand explicit, systematic phonics instruction

1. Describe basic phonetic elements
2. Describe explicit instructional strategies for helping beginning readers blend consonant and vowel sounds to decode single-syllable words with regular spellings
3. Describe explicit instructional strategies for helping beginning readers recognize common consonant-vowel patterns and for applying knowledge of these patterns to read single-syllable words and decode unfamiliar words through analogy with known words containing familiar patterns
4. Describe explicit instructional strategies for developing and reinforcing students’ skills in using phonics to decode multisyllabic words and read words containing consonant blends, consonant digraphs, vowel combinations, and r-controlled vowels
Step 1: Learn About Your Test

C. Understand word-analysis skills and vocabulary development
1. Describe the way phonics, syntax, and semantics interact as the reader constructs meaning
2. Describe methods for improving students’ reading proficiency by helping students apply word-analysis skills and word-attack strategies
3. Describe instructional strategies for helping students read unfamiliar multisyllabic words, including compound words, by using syllabication and structural analysis to identify common spelling patterns and morphemes within the words
4. Describe instructional strategies for helping students use context, including sentence structure as well as meaning clues, to identify unfamiliar words and technical terms, to determine the relevant meaning of a word with multiple meanings, and to verify the relevant meaning and/or pronunciation of a homonym or homograph
5. Demonstrate advanced knowledge of instructional strategies for building and extending vocabulary knowledge
6. Describe instructional strategies for helping students make effective use of a dictionary, thesaurus, glossary, or other word-reference materials to clarify understanding of a word’s denotative and connotative meanings

D. Understand the development of reading fluency and reading comprehension
1. Describe the role and importance of automatic word recognition
2. Describe instructional strategies for promoting development of students’ reading fluency
3. Differentiate the linguistic, sociological, cultural, cognitive, and psychological bases of the reading process and how they influence students’ reading comprehension
4. Differentiate literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension
5. Describe ways to help students apply comprehension strategies before reading, during reading, and after reading
6. Explain the importance of independent reading in the development of reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge
7. Explain ways to promote independent reading and family and community involvement in literacy activities

E. Understand reading comprehension strategies for fiction and poetry
1. Explain how to select a wide variety of literature at appropriate reading levels to encourage independent and reflective reading and to promote students’ comprehension and enjoyment of, and appreciation for, fiction and poetry
2. Describe instructional strategies to help students comprehend fiction by identifying basic story elements, retelling familiar stories, and making predictions based on information and pictures in the text
3. Describe different genres and types of literature and use this knowledge to improve students’ comprehension
4. Identify instructional strategies to help students recognize different genres and types of literature
5. Describe ways to strengthen students’ comprehension by developing their literary response and analysis skills

F. Understand reading comprehension strategies for nonfiction
1. Describe how to select and use a variety of informational, descriptive, and persuasive materials at appropriate reading levels to promote students’ comprehension of nonfiction, including content-area texts
2. Describe instructional strategies to help students distinguish main ideas and supporting details in a nonfiction text and to identify the author’s purpose
3. Describe how to use a variety of comprehension strategies to clarify understanding of a text
4. Describe instructional strategies to promote students’ comprehension by helping them identify logical organization and recognize structural patterns in nonfiction text
5. Describe instructional strategies for helping students locate and use evidence from a nonfiction text to support their predictions, opinions, and conclusions
Step 1: Learn About Your Test

IV. Writing and Research

A. Understand writing skills and processes
1. Describe writing as a developmental process
2. Describe how to write in various forms and for various audiences and purposes
3. Describe strategies for promoting students’ writing skills
4. Describe the recursive stages in the writing process and appropriate strategies for conferencing with students to provide effective feedback during all phases of writing
5. Describe the characteristics of effective composing
6. Describe the principles of effective written expression
7. Describe the interdependence of reading and writing development and the role of writing activities in promoting reading comprehension

B. Understand how to promote students’ knowledge of correct spelling, usage, and other writing mechanics
1. Describe spelling as a developmental process
2. Describe systematic spelling instruction, including strategies for helping students recognize common orthographic patterns and strategies for helping students generalize spelling knowledge by transferring what they learn in spelling lessons to their own writing
3. Describe appropriate instructional strategies for promoting students’ knowledge and use of writing mechanics, including correct usage, punctuation, and capitalization

V. Specialized Knowledge and Leadership Skills

A. Understand specialized knowledge and skills required to perform the role of a reading specialist
1. Describe the processes involved in language acquisition in order to diagnose reading difficulties
2. Distinguish types of disabilities and their implications for literacy development and reading instruction
3. Integrate knowledge of the reading needs of high-achieving students and effective instructional strategies to challenge them at appropriate levels
4. Integrate knowledge of developmental psychology, including theories of personality and learning behaviors in relation to literacy development
5. Describe in-depth knowledge of, and respect for, the influence of cultural contexts on language and literacy development
6. Integrate knowledge of the principles of educational measurement and evaluation as they apply to reading assessment and screening
7. Apply current research and recognize exemplary practices in literacy instruction
Step 1: Learn About Your Test

B. Understand leadership roles of the reading specialist in organizing and supervising reading programs and promoting staff development

1. Describe strategies for planning, organizing, coordinating, and supervising the reading program within the classroom, school, or division
2. Integrate appropriate strategies for instructing and advising teachers in the skills necessary to differentiate reading instruction for all students
3. Describe ways to initiate, implement, evaluate, and participate in professional development to enhance the quality of reading instruction and address the goals of the reading program
4. Describe principles, procedures, and issues involved in designing, implementing, evaluating, and improving the reading curriculum
5. Describe strategies for selecting, organizing, and using appropriate reading materials and instructional resources, including instructional technologies, to create a learning environment that promotes students' reading development

C. Understand strategies for communicating and collaborating with all members of the educational community to address the goals of the reading program

1. Integrate communication and facilitation skills to promote effective collaboration among colleagues, students' families, and the wider community in addressing the goals of the reading program
2. Describe how to apply techniques for consensus building and conflict resolution to facilitate communication about issues relating to the reading program
3. Describe how to interpret and communicate to colleagues and other members of the educational community relevant research findings about reading and their implications for reading instruction
4. Describe how to help advocate for public support of reading education by communicating effectively with policymakers, the media, and the general public
5. Describe strategies for developing effective partnerships between schools and community agencies to help address reading goals

VI. Analysis and Integration

A. Apply knowledge of the elements of reading, reading instruction, and leadership skills to prepare an organized written response to a constructed-response question

B. Apply knowledge of reading assessment and instruction to prepare an organized written response to a case study of an elementary school student
2. Familiarize Yourself with Test Questions

_Become comfortable with the types of questions you’ll find on the Praxis tests_

The _Praxis_ assessments include a variety of question types: constructed response (for which you write a response of your own); selected response, for which you select one or more answers from a list of choices or make another kind of selection (e.g., by clicking on a sentence in a text or by clicking on part of a graphic); and numeric entry, for which you enter a numeric value in an answer field. You may be familiar with these question formats from taking other standardized tests. If not, familiarize yourself with them so you don’t spend time during the test figuring out how to answer them.

_Understanding Computer-Delivered Questions_

Questions on computer-delivered tests are interactive in the sense that you answer by selecting an option or entering text on the screen. If you see a format you are not familiar with, read the directions carefully. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

For most questions, you respond by clicking an oval to select a single answer from a list of answer choices.

However, interactive question types may also ask you to respond by:

- **Clicking more than one oval** to select answers from a list of choices.
- **Typing in an entry box.** When the answer is a number, you may be asked to enter a numerical answer. Some questions may have more than one place to enter a response.
- **Clicking check boxes.** You may be asked to click check boxes instead of an oval when more than one choice within a set of answers can be selected.
- **Clicking parts of a graphic.** In some questions, you will select your answers by clicking on a location (or locations) on a graphic such as a map or chart, as opposed to choosing your answer from a list.
- **Clicking on sentences.** In questions with reading passages, you may be asked to choose your answers by clicking on a sentence (or sentences) within the reading passage.
- **Dragging and dropping answer choices into targets on the screen.** You may be asked to select answers from a list of choices and drag your answers to the appropriate location in a table, paragraph of text or graphic.
- **Selecting answer choices from a drop-down menu.** You may be asked to choose answers by selecting choices from a drop-down menu (e.g., to complete a sentence).

Remember that with every question you will get clear instructions.

Perhaps the best way to understand computer-delivered questions is to view the _Computer-delivered Testing Demonstration_ on the Praxis web site to learn how a computer-delivered test works and see examples of some types of questions you may encounter.
Understanding Selected-Response Questions

Many selected-response questions begin with the phrase “which of the following.” Take a look at this example:

Which of the following is a flavor made from beans?
(A) Strawberry
(B) Cherry
(C) Vanilla
(D) Mint

How would you answer this question?

All of the answer choices are flavors. Your job is to decide which of the flavors is the one made from beans.

Try following these steps to select the correct answer.

1) **Limit your answer to the choices given.** You may know that chocolate and coffee are also flavors made from beans, but they are not listed. Rather than thinking of other possible answers, focus only on the choices given (“which of the following”).

2) **Eliminate incorrect answers.** You may know that strawberry and cherry flavors are made from fruit and that mint flavor is made from a plant. That leaves vanilla as the only possible answer.

3) **Verify your answer.** You can substitute “vanilla” for the phrase “which of the following” and turn the question into this statement: “Vanilla is a flavor made from beans.” This will help you be sure that your answer is correct. If you’re still uncertain, try substituting the other choices to see if they make sense. You may want to use this technique as you answer selected-response questions on the practice tests.

Try a more challenging example

The vanilla bean question is pretty straightforward, but you’ll find that more challenging questions have a similar structure. For example:

Entries in outlines are generally arranged according to which of the following relationships of ideas?
(A) Literal and inferential
(B) Concrete and abstract
(C) Linear and recursive
(D) Main and subordinate

You’ll notice that this example also contains the phrase “which of the following.” This phrase helps you determine that your answer will be a “relationship of ideas” from the choices provided. You are supposed to find the choice that describes how entries, or ideas, in outlines are related.

Sometimes it helps to put the question in your own words. Here, you could paraphrase the question in this way: “How are outlines usually organized?” Since the ideas in outlines usually appear as main ideas and subordinate ideas, the answer is (D).
QUICK TIP: Don’t be intimidated by words you may not understand. It might be easy to be thrown by words like “recursive” or “inferential.” Read carefully to understand the question and look for an answer that fits. An outline is something you are probably familiar with and expect to teach to your students. So slow down, and use what you know.

Watch out for selected-response questions containing “NOT,” “LEAST,” and “EXCEPT”

This type of question asks you to select the choice that does not fit. You must be very careful because it is easy to forget that you are selecting the negative. This question type is used in situations in which there are several good solutions or ways to approach something, but also a clearly wrong way.

How to approach questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages

When answering questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages, provide only the information that the questions ask for. In the case of a map or graph, you might want to read the questions first, and then look at the map or graph. In the case of a long reading passage, you might want to go ahead and read the passage first, noting places you think are important, and then answer the questions. Again, the important thing is to be sure you answer the questions as they refer to the material presented. So read the questions carefully.

How to approach unfamiliar formats

New question formats are developed from time to time to find new ways of assessing knowledge. Tests may include audio and video components, such as a movie clip or animation, instead of a map or reading passage. Other tests may allow you to zoom in on details in a graphic or picture.

Tests may also include interactive questions. These questions take advantage of technology to assess knowledge and skills in ways that standard selected-response questions cannot. If you see a format you are not familiar with, read the directions carefully. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

QUICK TIP: Don’t make the questions more difficult than they are. Don’t read for hidden meanings or tricks. There are no trick questions on Praxis tests. They are intended to be serious, straightforward tests of your knowledge.

Understanding Constructed-Response Questions

Constructed-response questions require you to demonstrate your knowledge in a subject area by creating your own response to particular topics. Essays and short-answer questions are types of constructed-response questions.

For example, an essay question might present you with a topic and ask you to discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the opinion stated. You must support your position with specific reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Take a look at a few sample essay topics:

- “Celebrities have a tremendous influence on the young, and for that reason, they have a responsibility to act as role models.”
- “We are constantly bombarded by advertisements—on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines, on highway signs, and the sides of buses. They have become too pervasive. It’s time to put limits on advertising.”
- “Advances in computer technology have made the classroom unnecessary, since students and teachers are able to communicate with one another from computer terminals at home or at work.”
Keep these things in mind when you respond to a constructed-response question

1) **Answer the question accurately.** Analyze what each part of the question is asking you to do. If the question asks you to describe or discuss, you should provide more than just a list.

2) **Answer the question completely.** If a question asks you to do three distinct things in your response, you should cover all three things for the best score. Otherwise, no matter how well you write, you will not be awarded full credit.

3) **Answer the question that is asked.** Do not change the question or challenge the basis of the question. You will receive no credit or a low score if you answer another question or if you state, for example, that there is no possible answer.

4) **Give a thorough and detailed response.** You must demonstrate that you have a thorough understanding of the subject matter. However, your response should be straightforward and not filled with unnecessary information.

5) **Reread your response.** Check that you have written what you thought you wrote. Be sure not to leave sentences unfinished or omit clarifying information.

**QUICK TIP:** You may find that it helps to take notes on scratch paper so that you don't miss any details. Then you'll be sure to have all the information you need to answer the question.

For tests that have constructed-response questions, more detailed information can be found on page 22.
3. Practice with Sample Test Questions

*Answer practice questions and find explanations for correct answers*

**Sample Test Questions**

This test is available via computer delivery. The following sample question provides a preview of an actual screen used in a computer-delivered test. For the purposes of this Study Companion, the sample questions are shown as they would appear in a paper-delivered test.

During a writing activity a teacher writes two sentences from a sample of a student’s writing on the whiteboard. The teacher shows the students how to use appropriate proofreading marks and asks the students to proofread the first paragraph of their individual writing samples.

Which of the following traits is the teacher’s focus?

- Ideas
- Voice
- Conventions
- Organization

Answer the question above by clicking on the correct response.
The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions on the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.

1. A student's independent reading level is indicated by which of the following?
   (A) The student scores better than 90% accurate in word recognition skills and better than 50% in comprehension.
   (B) The student scores better than 95% accurate in word recognition skills and better than 75% in comprehension.
   (C) The student scores better than 95% accurate in word recognition skills and better than 90% in comprehension.
   (D) The student is measured at more than one standard deviation below the average reading speed for the student's grade level.

2. Research suggests a correlation between reading and writing. The integration of both processes can help students learn that
   (A) reading requires more in-depth knowledge of the use of language than does writing
   (B) reading is the core experience from which all of the language arts develop
   (C) writing requires more in-depth knowledge of the use of language than does reading
   (D) the processes support each other by sharing similar kinds of knowledge

3. A fifth-grade teacher asked the reading specialist to model a reading strategy that will help students draw inferences from texts. Which of the following strategies best meets this goal?
   (A) Question-answer relationships
   (B) Anticipation guides
   (C) Story mapping
   (D) Semantic feature analysis

4. Which of the following literacy coaching situations provides the best opportunity for meaningful feedback to teachers?
   (A) The principal has assigned the reading specialist to model new strategies in each classroom and then document implementation.
   (B) Teachers have asked the reading specialist to demonstrate a new strategy and provide support for implementation.
   (C) The principal has identified areas of reading instruction for each teacher that need improvement.
   (D) The district has sent a list of strategies to be demonstrated to all new teachers and followed up with monthly coaching sessions.

5. In the selection of a standardized reading achievement test to measure the effectiveness of a specific program, particular attention should be paid to which of the following features?
   (A) Content validity
   (B) Test length
   (C) Predictive power
   (D) Stability over time

6. To improve the comprehension of a group of seventh graders, a science teacher asks the reading specialist for strategies that will facilitate the students’ acquisition of content-area vocabulary. Which of the following strategies will most likely help the science teacher achieve this goal?
   (A) Generating semantic maps while reading and discussing the science textbook
   (B) Selecting the words from the text and have students locate them in the glossary and copy definitions
   (C) Putting the words into the context of a sentence and have students read and think about the underlined words
   (D) Rereading sections of the passages where the words are located and have students infer meaning from context
7. In a workshop focusing on the development of comprehension skills, a reading specialist provides opportunities for a group of teachers to practice using strategies that would be helpful in teaching reading to their students. The teachers are asked to work in pairs. One teacher is given a passage and is asked to delete every fifth word from the selection. The second teacher is asked to fill in the blanks. The two teachers then discuss the results. This procedure is known as
(A) critical-reading exercise
(B) guided reading activity
(C) cloze procedure
(D) knowledge-construction process

8. A reading specialist believes that the students in a middle school English class rely too much on the teacher for interpretation of the text the class is reading. Which of the following activities is the reading specialist most likely to recommend to encourage students to be more interactive with the text and creative in their own interpretation?
(A) Written book reports to be posted on the class's bulletin board
(B) A video version of the novel for the students to view during class
(C) New headings created by the students for each chapter in the novel
(D) Literature circles in which students lead the discussion about the novel

9. Studies generally support the belief that emergent readers will find which of the following most helpful in decoding new words?
(A) Knowledge of initial consonant sounds and medial vowel sounds
(B) Knowledge of beginning and ending consonant sounds
(C) Consonant and configuration clues
(D) Knowledge of initial consonant sounds and context

10. Which of the following would most influence a student's ability to learn from a text?
(A) The student's level of interest in the text
(B) The student's knowledge of the underlying structure in the text
(C) The student's understanding of the density level of new concepts in the text
(D) The student's prior knowledge about the topics covered in the text

11. Before writing narratives, fifth-grade students use reference materials to create semantic gradients like the one below. The semantic gradients are posted around the classroom so that students can refer to them while writing.

The primary objective of the lesson is for students to effectively use reference materials during writing as tools for
(A) selecting precise language
(B) spelling words correctly
(C) generating imaginative ideas
(D) avoiding repetitive vocabulary

12. The most effective formative evaluation of the success of a school's reading program is primarily dependent on which of the following?
(A) A comparison of students' pretest and posttest scores on an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI)
(B) A tightly controlled research design that permits data-based decisions
(C) Continuous monitoring and adjustment as feedback indicates
(D) A normed diagnostic assessment for making instructional decisions
13. As kindergarten students line up in class, a teacher engages them in an oral language activity. The teacher asks each student to say his or her name and then repeat it, stretching the sounds so that each unique sound is emphasized. The teacher’s purpose for the activity is most likely to allow students to practice

(A) grapheme-phoneme correspondence  
(B) phoneme segmentation  
(C) letter and sound manipulation  
(D) onset and rime blending

14. Which of the following statements would be most consistent with sociolinguistic theory with respect to student literacy and learning?

(A) Students are most empowered when working individually.  
(B) Students are most motivated to learn when tasks are highly challenging.  
(C) Students learn best through scaffolded literacy activities.  
(D) Students learn best through authentic literacy activities.

15. Which of the following best describes a diphthong?

(A) The midcentral vowel in unaccented syllables  
(B) A vowel speech sound that begins with one vowel sound and glides toward another vowel position in the same syllable  
(C) Two letters that represent one speech sound  
(D) A spelling pattern in which two or more adjoining letters represent a single vowel sound

16. Of the following methods of reporting student scores on standardized reading tests, which would be the easiest to misinterpret according to the International Literacy Association?

(A) Stanines  
(B) Percentiles  
(C) Grade-equivalent scores  
(D) Raw scores

17. A classroom teacher asks the reading specialist to model a writing lesson on biographies. The reading specialist begins the lesson by reading aloud a short biography to the class. Which of the following best explains the specialist’s approach?

(A) Reading aloud an example allows the students to hear the text with the proper expression and accents.  
(B) Reading aloud an example of a genre can provide students a sample for style and form.  
(C) Biographies read aloud help students recognize good role models.  
(D) Biographies read aloud help to teach students to sequence events correctly in their own writing.

18. Which of the following procedures is the most effective in improving reading for most students?

(A) Providing many opportunities to read relatively easy material  
(B) Teaching students to look for the main ideas in paragraphs  
(C) Teaching students to maintain speed for different purposes  
(D) Providing students with ample opportunities to engage in choral reading
19. Evelyn is a fifth-grade student with good word recognition skills, but she avoids reading assignments and independent reading time. Her teacher suspects that the problem is a lack of motivation. Which of the following types of assignments for Evelyn is the reading specialist most likely to recommend to her teacher?

   (A) Reading short-leveled passages and then progressing to more difficult ones
   (B) “Practice reading” with teacher-selected texts and comprehension questions
   (C) Involving Evelyn in language activities with texts and activities of her choice
   (D) Providing Evelyn with discrete exercises on the topics of main idea and inference

20. The most beneficial effect of providing kindergarten students with at least three repeated readings of a story is

   (A) enjoyment of the story by students increases motivation to read
   (B) word awareness is more meaningful to students
   (C) new vocabulary is acquired by the students
   (D) retelling of the story by students becomes more complex
Answers to Sample Questions

1. The best answer is (C). Most authorities define a reader’s independent reading level as that at which the child reads a passage with ease; i.e., not needing instructional support. It is common practice when assessing a student using an IRI that an independent reading level is established when the child obtains a 95% or better in oral reading accuracy and is able to correctly answer approximately 90% of the comprehension questions.

2. The best answer is (D). The goal of both reading and writing is similar; i.e., making meaning. Through interaction with texts based on prior experiences and knowledge of written expression, readers create meaning. In a similar way, the writer is interpreting meaning while interacting with the text as he or she writes.

3. The best answer is (A). Through the implementation of Question-Answer Relationships (QAR), a framework is built for providing effective comprehension instruction in reading strategies. Teachers and students can share the language of In the Book, In My Head, Right There, Think and Search, Author and Me, and On My Own. Through learning how to utilize the categories of Think and Search and Author and Me, students learn how to make inferences while reading text.

4. The best answer is (B). One of the most important methods of literacy coaching is demonstrating a lesson/strategy in a teacher’s classroom with the teacher having some role in the lesson. Follow-up discussion and additional observations or co-planning activities should be part of this process. Teachers report that this coaching model helps them to better understand how to implement the new technique, and teachers feel a greater sense of active participation and commitment.

5. The best answer is (A). Content validity refers to the extent to which a test includes or represents all of the content in a particular construct; i.e., the test should include the criteria that should be met in determining a student’s achievement in reading.

6. The best answer is (A). Semantic mapping is an appropriate strategy for teaching vocabulary in a science textbook. This technique combines oral discussion with a visual representation of the schematic relations between key words and associated vocabulary. The graphic structure created by semantic mapping provides a basis for connecting prior knowledge to new ideas.

7. The best answer is (C). Cloze procedures require a reader to provide words that have been deleted from a passage. The words that have been deleted are sometimes precise; e.g., every fifth word. At other times, words requiring the reader to use specific strategies focusing on specific semantic, syntactic, or graphic cues can be deleted.

8. The best answer is (D). In literature circles, students often choose the book they want to read and form groups to read and respond to the text. The students discuss the book among themselves, with the teacher participating in some of the discussion; activities related to the text are student-directed.

9. The best answer is (D). At the emergent reader level, children are beginning to learn sound-symbol relationships. They also learn that reading is a communicative process. Use of emergent readers’ knowledge of initial consonant sounds and context clues to check meaning are important early decoding strategies.

10. The best answer is (D). The most important factor in student understanding of new material is that comprehension must be constructed on a basis of previously acquired knowledge.

11. The best answer is (A). Semantic gradients support students in understanding shades of meaning. The reference materials used to make semantic gradients, namely dictionaries and thesauri, help students to recognize that while words can mean nearly the same thing, the nuances are different. Using reference materials to create semantic gradients supports students in selecting precise vocabulary to convey the intended message.

12. The best answer is (C). Formative evaluation involves continuously assessing, monitoring, and analyzing data on an ongoing basis to improve the school’s reading program.

13. The best answer is (B). Phonemic awareness is the ability to think about and work with the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. In the activity described, students are asked to break their names into separate sounds, an example of phonemic segmentation.

14. The best answer is (D). Sociolinguists believe that learning is a function of the context/culture in which it occurs. Therefore, learning requires social interaction and collaboration, and learning activities should be authentic.
15. The best answer is (B). A diphthong is a complex vowel sound in which the first vowel gradually moves (glides) toward a second vowel. Some examples of diphthongs are /oi/ in “boil,” and /ou/ in “house.”

16. The best answer is (C). A grade-equivalent score represents a student’s reading level when compared to the performance of students in the norming group of a specific test. The grade-equivalent score represents a grade level and month (e.g., 4.7) of the typical median score for a student. It does not represent the level of reading material in which students should be placed for instruction. According to a 1991 IRA resolution, grade-equivalent scores should not be used “to report performance of either individuals or groups of test-takers.”

17. The best answer is (B). Reading high-quality examples of literature in different genres can have a positive influence on student writing. Students need to hear many examples of various types of literature to create their own.

18. The best answer is (A). Research has shown that the amount of time students spend in reading text at an independent level is an excellent predictor of reading achievement. The benefits of independent reading include building fluency, vocabulary, and background knowledge or schema.

19. The best answer is (C). A major factor that motivates a student to engage in reading activities is ownership. Specifically, students are more engaged when allowed to choose their own books for reading and to express their ideas and opinions about books they have read with others.

20. The best answer is (D). According to the results of a study by Pappas (1991), it was found that with multiple exposures to a story, a child’s ability to retell the story became increasingly rich.
About the Constructed-Response Questions

The Reading for Virginia Educators: Reading Specialist test consists of two constructed-response questions, one of which is a case study. Each question is scored on a 0–3 scale using the following general scoring guide.

General Scoring Guide

Note: The elements of reading and reading instruction assessed in the constructed-response questions are those included in the RVE assessment domains.

Score of 3
The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Clearly and specifically answers all parts of the question in a way that directly addresses the instructional situation described.
- Shows strong knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question; any errors of fact or terminology are minor and do not detract from the thorough understanding shown.
- Provides strong supporting evidence and rationales.

Score of 2
The response demonstrates a general understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Adequately answers most or all parts of the question in a way that is appropriate for the instructional situation described.
- Shows general knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question; any errors do not detract from the general understanding shown.
- Provides adequate supporting evidence and rationales.

Score of 1
The response demonstrates a weak or limited understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Answers some part (or parts) of the question at a basic level.
- Has one or more of the following weaknesses:
  - Fails to answer most parts of the question and/or fails to address crucial aspects of the instructional situation described.
  - Shows weak or limited knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question; any errors may be indicated by errors or misconceptions.
  - Any evidence or rationales provided are weak or limited.

Score of 0
The response demonstrates no understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Fails to respond appropriately to any part of the question.
- Shows no knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question; any information presented about reading and reading instruction is seriously in error.

Note: The mere presence of reading-specific words or phrases that might be used in an adequate response does not, by itself, indicate knowledge. Also receiving a score of 0 would be responses that are blank, completely off-topic, or not written in English.
Sample Constructed-Response Question

Ms. Croydon is a reading specialist in a K-3 school. The regular education teachers have approached her for assistance in identifying students with special needs in the area of literacy. They would also like to know how to utilize the resources of other colleagues in the school to assist in meeting the literacy needs of their students. Ms. Croydon has decided to design a series of staff development workshops concerning these topics.

Tasks:

1. Based on the information provided above, identify and describe two types of assessments to identify specific student literacy needs that Ms. Croydon should include in her workshops. Include information on the rationale for using each assessment.

2. Identify and describe two ways in which the regular education teachers can utilize the services of other colleagues to meet the literacy needs of their students.

Sample Response that Received a Score of 3

Ms. Croydon should share various assessment tools with the teachers when she conducts her training sessions. One tool she can ask teachers to use is a running record. This individually-administered assessment evaluates a student’s accuracy and reading rate, i.e., reading behaviors, when orally reading a passage. As the student reads, the teacher marks the errors. A student may substitute, omit, or insert words as he/she is reading. The errors can be analyzed and classified according to the three cueing systems of semantic, graphophonic, or syntactic cues. In addition to evaluating a student’s oral reading proficiency, a teacher can assess the child’s comprehension of the text. This information can be used to determine the student’s specific strengths and weaknesses. The teacher can then use this data to plan for instruction.

Another assessment tool Ms. Croydon can share with the regular education teachers is a retelling rubric. This tool will give the teacher information about the student’s comprehension of a story he/she has read. Depending on the type of story that is read, the rubric can be written to assess elements of nonfiction such as main ideas and supporting details, or in the case of fictional text the rubric can assess understanding of the elements of character, setting, problem, plot, and solution. Ms. Croydon can demonstrate how to extend the use of a rubric as an assessment tool in evaluating students’ writing. For this application, a rubric can be developed using, for example, a four-point scale which measures the student’s progress in different elements of writing such as focus, content, organization, style, and conventions. Rubrics can be used throughout the year and are very valuable tools in identifying specific strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing skill development.

The regular education teachers also want information on how to utilize the resources of other colleagues in helping their students succeed. One way of achieving this goal is to make use of the services of the school’s child study team. The professional colleagues on this team can provide assistance with further testing of individual students and help with designing appropriate instruction. The members of the child study team can also assist with providing individual remediation opportunities for students with specific literacy needs.

The librarian or media specialist could be another resource with whom Ms. Croydon can encourage teachers to collaborate in helping to address student literacy needs. The school’s librarian can be helpful in selecting books on the child’s reading level. Also, the librarian is an excellent source of information regarding uses of technology to aid student’s literacy development. Furthermore, a media specialist can provide information (resources) and direct instruction to students when research projects, author studies, content area extension activities, etc., are assigned by the regular education teacher.

Commentary on Response with a Score of 3

This sample received a score of 3 because every part of each task was clearly and specifically addressed. In task 1, the test taker identified and completely described running records and rubrics as two assessment tools. In response to the second task, the test taker referenced the school’s child study team and the librarian as two examples of colleagues who could serve as resources to the teachers, and fully discussed how these professionals could help meet the literacy needs of students. This response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction.
Step 3: Practice with Sample Test Questions

Sample Response that Received a Score of 2

In identifying students who have literacy needs, Ms. Croydon may begin with suggesting teachers start by reviewing test data from the students’ previous school year. This data may include such measures as report card grades, standardized testing results, scores of tests that accompany the school’s core reading program, portfolios, and anecdotal information that the previous teacher(s) may have written and placed in a student’s file. The rationale for suggesting teachers review the data is to get information on a child’s overall performance in the area of literacy during the past school year. This data can then be used as a foundation for planning instruction for the current school year.

Additionally, in order to gather data on a child’s current literacy strengths and weaknesses, Ms. Croydon may provide training in the use of checklists to monitor a student’s progress during a literature circle, reading or writing workshop, or a guided reading group activity, for example. A checklist is an example of an informal assessment that, when used consistently throughout the school year, can provide very useful information regarding a child’s progress in all areas of literacy development. Ms. Croydon can emphasize to the teachers that this data is also very important, along with the measures described above, in addressing the specific learning needs of each student.

The teachers can also be trained to make use of the resources of other professionals in their school. Ms. Croydon can, first of all, explain to the teachers how she in her role as a reading specialist can assist them in the areas of assessment and instruction. For example, she can offer to have meetings with individual teachers when they have specific topics to discuss. Ms. Croydon can model lessons in reading and writing in classrooms. She can also help the teachers by suggesting professional resources on topics of instructional need and interest for them to read and discuss as a group. Ms. Croydon’s expertise as a reading specialist can be very valuable in assisting teachers to provide a high quality literacy program for their students.

Commentary on Response with a Score of 2

This sample received a score of 2. All parts of task 1 were clearly and specifically addressed. The test taker identified and completely described reviewing test data from the student’s previous year and using checklists to monitor progress during various literacy activities as two assessment tools. In response to task 2, the test taker identified Ms. Croydon as one resource the teachers could utilize in providing services to meet student needs in literacy. Task 2, therefore, was not completely addressed because two resources needed to be identified. Due to incompleteness, this response demonstrates a general understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

Sample Response that Received a Score of 1

Students can struggle with many different things when they are reading and writing. Teachers should give the students a phonics test to see what the problem is. Maybe the students don’t know all the sounds and this may be causing them to not be able to read a lot of words. Teachers should have meetings with Ms. Croydon because she is a reading specialist and will be able to help them with their students. At the meetings, the teachers can discuss different instructional strategies they can use with their students. For comprehension, the teachers can use before, during, and after strategies. For word identification, the teachers can use word lists to increase students’ growth in developing a sight vocabulary. For fluency, the teachers can have the students do repeated readings of books at their independent reading level. Ms. Croydon can be a very valuable resource to regular education teachers.

Commentary on Response with a Score of 1

This sample received a score of 1 because responses to both tasks were incomplete and showed an understanding of the question at a limited level. In task 1, a phonics test was identified as one type of assessment and it was described with limited explanation. In task 2, the response was also incomplete. One resource; i.e., the reading specialist, was identified as a colleague who could serve as a resource to teachers, and the explanation of her role shows a limited understanding of knowledge and procedures relevant to the question. This response demonstrates a weak or limited understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction.
Case Study

This case study focuses on Nolin, a second-grade student. Nolin is very cooperative in class and seems to approach all learning activities with enthusiasm. He is constantly reading a variety of books. Nolin often finishes all his class work very quickly and reports to his teacher that he doesn't have anything to do. Using the information given in this scenario and in the following documentation, write a response in which you apply your knowledge of literacy assessment, instructional strategies, and instructional materials to analyze this case study. Your response should completely address the following tasks:

Task 1: Identify and describe two literacy difficulties Nolin is experiencing. Cite evidence from the information provided to support your observations.

Task 2: For each of the difficulties cited in Task 1, identify and describe two instructional strategies Nolin's teacher can use to improve his literacy development. Include the purpose of each strategy and how each will benefit Nolin's literacy development in the future.

Task 3: For each of the difficulties cited in Task 1, identify and describe one type of instructional material Nolin's teacher can use to help improve his literacy skills. Include information on the purpose and how each will increase Nolin's literacy achievement.
Running Record Assessment

Ms. Jorgenson, Nolin's teacher, did a running record on a section of a book he had not read before titled *Staying Friends Forever*. Printed below is a copy of the results of the oral reading part of the assessment.

I first met Dave in a karate class.
I was new there and didn’t know anyone. The other students seemed to be able to do all the moves and I had no idea what I was doing.

Just as I was thinking that this class was no fun at all, Dave came up and said, “I can tell you’re new here. I think you are doing great!”

Suddenly I began to feel better. Karate wasn’t so bad after all I thought.

A few weeks passed and Dave and I became best friends. Now for the sad part. One day Dave came into class and told me that his family was moving to California.

“You can’t move!” I screamed at him. Dave was sad also.
Following the oral reading of this excerpt from the book, Ms. Jorgenson took notes on Nolin’s oral reading behaviors. She first asked him to retell the story and then continued to evaluate his comprehension by asking questions. Below are the results of this part of the assessment.

**Teacher Notes:**

Nolin read this passage very quickly. He did not attend to punctuation marks. He did not read with expression or proper phrasing. After reading, Nolin commented on what a good reader he is. He reported that he can read lots of words very fast.

**Story Retell:**

“The boy liked karate. He didn’t want to go away.”

**Comprehension Questions:**

Q: At the beginning, what is the setting of the story?
A: In the house

Q: Who are the characters in the story?
A: Dave and some other boy

Q: How did the speaker in the story and Dave first meet?
A: At school

Q: There were two problems in this story. Name them.
A: Dave hated karate. Dave didn’t like his new house.

Q: What do you think will happen next in the story?
A: I think Dave will start to like his new house once he gets used to it.

Q: How did the boys feel at the end of this passage?
A: They were happy because they liked the new house.
Teacher Anecdotal Notes

Ms. Jorgenson frequently “kid watches” the students in her class. Printed below is a copy of the notes she wrote while observing Nolin in various learning situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>Nolin is in a literature group with 3 other students. They are discussing traits that describe the main character in the story they just read together. Nolin did most of the oral reading in his group. He is looking around at other groups and not contributing to the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>Following the independent silent reading of a story in the students’ reading anthology, children were assigned to cooperative groups to create a poster of the most exciting part of the story. Other students in Nolin’s group were unhappy with Nolin not contributing to the project. He told the students he forgot what the story was about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/5</td>
<td>Students silently reread a short story in their reading anthology. They were given four comprehension questions to respond to in writing. Nolin completed the assignment in five minutes and did not answer the questions correctly. Conference with Nolin and he reported that he read quickly and couldn’t remember anything. Discussed with Nolin that reading means not only reading words but understanding what you read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>Conference with Nolin’s parents regarding his progress in reading and writing. Reported that Nolin is rushing through all assignments and often doesn’t do well on follow-up written work. Parents agreed to discuss this issue at home. Another conference will be held in a month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>During science today, Nolin volunteered to read the information on rocks that was on the lab sheet. Other students commented on what a good reader he is.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes on Writing Workshop - A Personal Narrative

During Writing Workshop, Ms. Jorgenson has been teaching a unit on personal narrative as a genre. She has read numerous mentor texts, students have written pieces in their writer’s notebooks, and children have discussed personal narrative texts they have read in their literature circles. Ms. Jorgenson asked the students to choose a piece from their Writer’s Notebook to expand into a published personal narrative. Printed below is a sampling of Nolin’s writing through the steps in the writing process.

(11/5 -- piece chosen by Nolin from his Writer’s Notebook)

I got a puppe. I lik him.

(11/12 -- Nolin’s second draft following minilessons on story mapping related to narrative organization and techniques for elaborating on text)

On satirday I got a new broun and whit puppe he is cut. I play with him I giv him food.

(11/20 -- Nolin’s published personal narrative after additional minilessons on elaboration, sequence of events, and introductions and conclusions. Nolin also participated in teacher and peer conferencing.)

Last satirday I got a new broun and white puppe with curle hair his nam is rodne. I like to play with him I tak him to bas ball gams with me. I play frizbee with him I hav fun.
Step 3: Practice with Sample Test Questions

Sample Response that Received a Score of 3

One literacy difficulty Nolin displays is in the area of oral reading fluency. The running record indicates that 16 words out of a 124-word passage were read incorrectly or omitted. Nolin had two miscues involving contractions, i.e., didn’t and wasn’t. One of these changed the meaning of the sentence about karate. He also left off the ending of words when, for example, he read “seem” for “seemed,” and “in” for “into.” Eight of Nolin’s miscues were omissions. His oral reading accuracy rate was 87% which shows that he is reading at a frustration level. Nolin did not stop and self-correct his miscues in order to show that he was monitoring what he read for comprehension. The Teacher Notes following the oral reading also give evidence that Nolin has difficulty with reading fluency. Ms. Jorgenson noted that Nolin read very fast and did not attend to punctuation marks or reading with expression and proper phrasing.

A second literacy difficulty Nolin is experiencing is reading comprehension. After reading the passage in the running record orally, Nolin was not able to adequately retell the story. His retell consisted of two sentences which were not completely correct. When Ms. Jorgenson further prompted recall of the story, Nolin was only able to correctly answer one out of six questions. Nolin’s reading comprehension difficulties are also evident in the Teacher Anecdotal Notes. On 10/1, it was noted that Nolin forgot what the story was about when asked to help the students in his cooperative group create a poster. On 10/5, Nolin was unable to correctly answer four comprehension questions Ms. Jorgenson had assigned following the rereading of a short story.

Two instructional strategies that will benefit Nolin’s development in the area of reading fluency are Reader’s Theatre and partner reading. Reader’s Theatre would allow Nolin the opportunity to read his part silently at first in preparation for the “performance” in front of his peers. Reader’s Theatre will give Nolin an authentic reason to participate in repeated readings. The performance element in this strategy will encourage Nolin to read at an appropriate rate. Instruction, social interaction with others, and modeling are all natural parts of Reader’s Theatre. Nolin’s development in fluency will increase as a result of Ms. Jorgenson using this technique. The second instructional strategy, partner reading, can help Nolin in developing his oral reading fluency. Ms. Jorgenson can assign Nolin a partner who is a good oral reader. Ms. Jorgenson can also choose materials that are at an independent reading level for Nolin. Through the shared reading of text, Nolin can hear good modeling of oral reading and he can practice fluency when he reads to his partner.

In the area of reading comprehension, two instructional strategies Ms. Jorgenson can implement are explicit instruction in before, during, and after reading techniques and the use of story mapping as a method of organizing narrative elements. Some examples of before reading strategies could include making predictions and taking a picture walk through the book. A during-reading technique could be self-monitoring for understanding, i.e., reading a few pages of text and stopping to ask “What did I just read?” An after-reading strategy could be making a text-to-self connection in which Nolin may ask himself about how the story relates to his experiences. All of these strategies would first have to be taught and modeled by Ms. Jorgenson. The goal is for Nolin to internalize and consistently implement them as he develops his reading comprehension skills. A second comprehension strategy could be story mapping. Nolin was unable to identify the characters, setting, plot, problem, or solution in several of the assessments. Using a story map (a type of graphic organizer) with boxes to identify the basic elements of fiction would help Nolin see the story in a structured, visual way. This technique, if used consistently, can help Nolin learn to look for these elements while reading fictional stories and therefore develop his skills in the area of reading comprehension. Two types of instructional materials Nolin’s teacher can use to improve Nolin’s fluency and comprehension are leveled readers to be used during guided reading activities and computer programs that include series of books on CDs. Leveled readers provide text for Nolin at his instructional level. Use of leveled readers can give Nolin an opportunity to practice silent and oral reading fluency, and he can also practice using the before, during, and after reading strategies Ms. Jorgenson will teach to improve his reading comprehension. With books on CD, Nolin can listen to a narrator model good oral reading while viewing the text on the screen at the same time. It would be helpful if Nolin could then record his own rereading of the text he just heard on CD. He then would be able to evaluate his own oral reading, and with continuous modeling and practice his fluency should increase. Also, CD programs typically have a comprehension assessment component. If Nolin is aware that he will be taking a test after listening to a story, growth in reading comprehension should occur as well.
Nolin's enthusiasm and interest in a wide variety of books combined with an instructional focus on fluency and reading for meaning should provide Nolin with a firm foundation in reading in his second-grade classroom.

Commentary on Response with a Score of 3
This sample received a score of 3 because every part of each task was clearly and specifically addressed. In response to the second task, two strategies to improve fluency, Reader’s Theatre and partner reading, are identified and completely described. Explicit instruction in before reading, during reading, and after reading strategies and story mapping are given as strategies to improve reading comprehension. For task 3, the test taker describes how leveled readers and computer programs, which include books on CDs, will support Nolin's reading development in fluency and comprehension. Supporting evidence and rationales are provided for each of the three tasks. This response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the tasks in the case study.

Sample Response that Received a Score of 2
Two literacy difficulties which Nolin is experiencing are comprehending text and writing a personal narrative. The evidence to support Nolin's difficulty in comprehending text is as follows:

• When reading aloud, Nolin misread words that changed the meaning of the text and he didn't attempt to self-correct.
• When reading aloud, he didn't attend to punctuation or read with expression. This shows a problem with comprehension because a skilled reader will adjust reading rate and expression to reflect the text message.
• Nolin's story retelling is very limited and fails to include text details such as the characters, setting, problem, events, or solution.
• When asked to answer the comprehension questions, Nolin incorrectly answered five of the six.

The evidence to support Nolin's difficulty writing a personal narrative is as follows:

• His sentences are very basic, e.g., "I lik (like) him. I have fun."
• There is limited sentence structure variation. For example, most sentences begin with "I."
• He writes with limited word choice and adds few details throughout the process.
• There are many writing convention errors, e.g., "saturday" for “Saturday,” “puppe” for “puppy,” and “I like to play with him I tak him to bas ball gams with me,” for “I like to play with him. I take him to baseball games with me.”

To help Nolin develop his comprehension abilities, his teacher Ms. Jorgenson can provide him with reading materials at his instructional level and give direct, explicit instruction in various comprehension strategies through “think alouds.” The reading comprehension strategies that Ms. Jorgenson can model and provide opportunities for Nolin to practice can include predicting, previewing, self-monitoring for understanding, asking questions while reading, and adjusting reading rate to ensure comprehension of the text. In addition to doing “think-alouds,” Ms. Jorgenson can continue and possibly expand the use of literature circles as a strategy for increasing Nolin's comprehension skills. As students gather to discuss a book, the conversation is guided by the students' responses to what they have read. Within a structured format, the group may discuss events, characters, setting, author's craft, and personal experiences that relate to the text. Through this type of active collaboration with his peers, Nolin can learn to understand that reading is about constructing meaning, not just reading words. With further guidance and reinforcement of procedures and expectations literature circles should be an extremely effective strategy to improve Nolin's comprehension.

To help Nolin develop his skills in writing a personal narrative, Ms. Jorgenson can show him an object and ask him to verbally describe it. Nolin can then write two sentences about the object and Ms. Jorgenson can model how to expand the sentences to show varied word choice and additional description. Ms. Jorgenson can do minilessons on how to write different types of sentences. She can also teach Nolin basic skills in writing conventions, e.g., punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
An instructional material Ms. Jorgenson can use to help Nolin with reading comprehension is sentence strips. She can write a basic sentence on each strip, ask Nolin to read the sentence orally, and then ask him to rephrase the information. For helping Nolin with writing a personal narrative, Ms. Jorgenson should create a writing center in the classroom. The center should have a collection of writing materials and a list of topics of interest to second grade students. Nolin can choose a topic and complete a graphic organizer.

Sample Response that Received a Score of 1

Nolin is experiencing difficulty with fluency. He omits many words when he reads orally because he seems to be trying to read very fast. Nolin is also having difficulty with comprehension. Although he reports that he can read many words, he doesn’t answer comprehension questions very well.

There are many strategies Ms. Jorgenson, Nolin’s teacher, can use to help him with fluency and comprehension. To address fluency, Nolin’s teacher could have him read a passage that has marked phrase boundaries. Ms. Jorgenson can mark the phrases before Nolin reads the text. For example, she could mark the following sentence: “I first met Dave / in a karate class.” Then she can model how to read and pause at each slash. For comprehension, Ms. Jorgenson can use a story map to help Nolin understand the parts of a story.

To help Nolin’s fluency, Ms. Jorgenson can have him use a tape recorder to record his oral reading. Once a week Nolin can record himself and listen to the tape. To help with comprehension, the teacher can use sticky notes while Nolin is reading. Nolin can use a pink one to identify the characters, a green one for the setting, a yellow one for the problem, and an orange one to identify the solution.

Commentary on Response with a Score of 2

This sample received a score of 2. All parts of task 1 were thoroughly and clearly addressed. The test taker identified comprehension and writing a personal narrative as two of Nolin’s literacy difficulties. Both of these literacy problems were supported with evidence from the documents. In task 2, the test taker explained how “think alouds” and literature circles were appropriate strategies to address Nolin’s comprehension problems. Having Nolin write a description of an object does not specifically address his needs in the genre of personal narrative. A second strategy, teaching minilessons on writing conventions, is an appropriate strategy for helping Nolin with his identified difficulties in personal narratives. In task 3, the test taker identified sentence strips and a writing center as instructional materials to help Nolin’s growth in comprehension and writing, respectively. The purpose for using these materials and how each will increase Nolin’s literacy achievement were not explained. Although most parts of the three tasks were addressed, this response is incomplete and, therefore, demonstrates a general understanding of reading and reading instruction relevant to the case study.
4. Determine Your Strategy for Success

Set clear goals and deadlines so your test preparation is focused and efficient

Effective Praxis test preparation doesn’t just happen. You’ll want to set clear goals and deadlines for yourself along the way. Otherwise, you may not feel ready and confident on test day.

1) Learn what the test covers.

You may have heard that there are several different versions of the same test. It’s true. You may take one version of the test and your friend may take a different version a few months later. Each test has different questions covering the same subject area, but both versions of the test measure the same skills and content knowledge.

You’ll find specific information on the test you’re taking on page 5, which outlines the content categories that the test measures and what percentage of the test covers each topic. Visit www.ets.org/praxis/testprep for information on other Praxis tests.

2) Assess how well you know the content.

Research shows that test takers tend to overestimate their preparedness—this is why some test takers assume they did well and then find out they did not pass.

The Praxis tests are demanding enough to require serious review of likely content, and the longer you’ve been away from the content, the more preparation you will most likely need. If it has been longer than a few months since you’ve studied your content area, make a concerted effort to prepare.

3) Collect study materials.

Gathering and organizing your materials for review are critical steps in preparing for the Praxis tests. Consider the following reference sources as you plan your study:

- Did you take a course in which the content area was covered? If yes, do you still have your books or your notes?
- Does your local library have a high school-level textbook in this area? Does your college library have a good introductory college-level textbook in this area?

Practice materials are available for purchase for many Praxis tests at www.ets.org/praxis/testprep. Test preparation materials include sample questions and answers with explanations.

4) Plan and organize your time.

You can begin to plan and organize your time while you are still collecting materials. Allow yourself plenty of review time to avoid cramming new material at the end. Here are a few tips:

- Choose a test date far enough in the future to leave you plenty of preparation time. Test dates can be found at www.ets.org/praxis/register/centers_dates.
- Work backward from that date to figure out how much time you will need for review.
- Set a realistic schedule—and stick to it.
5) Practice explaining the key concepts.

*Praxis* tests with constructed-response questions assess your ability to explain material effectively. As a teacher, you’ll need to be able to explain concepts and processes to students in a clear, understandable way. What are the major concepts you will be required to teach? Can you explain them in your own words accurately, completely, and clearly? Practice explaining these concepts to test your ability to effectively explain what you know.

6) Understand how questions will be scored.

Scoring information can be found on page 54.

7) Develop a study plan.

A study plan provides a road map to prepare for the *Praxis* tests. It can help you understand what skills and knowledge are covered on the test and where to focus your attention. Use the study plan template on page 38 to organize your efforts.

And most important—get started!

Would a Study Group Work for You?

Using this guide as part of a study group

People who have a lot of studying to do sometimes find it helpful to form a study group with others who are working toward the same goal. Study groups give members opportunities to ask questions and get detailed answers. In a group, some members usually have a better understanding of certain topics, while others in the group may be better at other topics. As members take turns explaining concepts to one another, everyone builds self-confidence.

If the group encounters a question that none of the members can answer well, the group can go to a teacher or other expert and get answers efficiently. Because study groups schedule regular meetings, members study in a more disciplined fashion. They also gain emotional support. The group should be large enough so that multiple people can contribute different kinds of knowledge, but small enough so that it stays focused. Often, three to six members is a good size.

Here are some ways to use this guide as part of a study group:

- **Plan the group’s study program.** Parts of the study plan template, beginning on page 38, can help to structure your group’s study program. By filling out the first five columns and sharing the worksheets, everyone will learn more about your group’s mix of abilities and about the resources, such as textbooks, that members can share with the group. In the sixth column (“Dates I will study the content”), you can create an overall schedule for your group’s study program.

- **Plan individual group sessions.** At the end of each session, the group should decide what specific topics will be covered at the next meeting and who will present each topic. Use the topic headings and subheadings in the Test at a Glance table on page 5 to select topics, and then select practice questions, beginning on page 15.

- **Prepare your presentation for the group.** When it’s your turn to present, prepare something that is more than a lecture. Write two or three original questions to pose to the group. Practicing writing actual questions can help you better understand the topics covered on the test as well as the types of questions you will encounter on the test. It will also give other members of the group extra practice at answering questions.
Step 4: Determine Your Strategy for Success

• **Take a practice test together.** The idea of a practice test is to simulate an actual administration of the test, so scheduling a test session with the group will add to the realism and may also help boost everyone’s confidence. Remember, complete the practice test using only the time that will be allotted for that test on your administration day.

• **Learn from the results of the practice test.** Review the results of the practice test, including the number of questions answered correctly in each content category. For tests that contain constructed-response questions, look at the Sample Test Questions section, which also contain sample responses to those questions and shows how they were scored. Then try to follow the same guidelines that the test scorers use.

• **Be as critical as you can.** You’re not doing your study partner(s) any favors by letting them get away with an answer that does not cover all parts of the question adequately.

• **Be specific.** Write comments that are as detailed as the comments about the sample responses. Indicate where and how your study partner(s) are doing an inadequate job of answering the question. Writing notes in the margins of the answer sheet may also help.

• **Be supportive.** Include comments that point out what your study partner(s) got right.

Then plan one or more study sessions based on aspects of the questions on which group members performed poorly. For example, each group member might be responsible for rewriting one paragraph of a response in which someone else did an inadequate job.

Whether you decide to study alone or with a group, remember that the best way to prepare is to have an organized plan. The plan should set goals based on specific topics and skills that you need to learn, and it should commit you to a realistic set of deadlines for meeting those goals. Then you need to discipline yourself to stick with your plan and accomplish your goals on schedule.
5. Develop Your Study Plan

Develop a personalized study plan and schedule

Planning your study time is important because it will help ensure that you review all content areas covered on the test. Use the sample study plan below as a guide. It shows a plan for the Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading test. Following that is a study plan template that you can fill out to create your own plan. Use the “Learn about Your Test” and “Test Specifications” information beginning on page 5 to help complete it.

Use this worksheet to:
1. Define Content Areas: List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. Determine Strengths and Weaknesses: Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. Identify Resources: Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. Study: Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

Praxis Test Name (Test Code): Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading (5712)
Test Date: 9/15/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content covered</th>
<th>Description of content</th>
<th>How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)</th>
<th>What resources do I have/need for the content?</th>
<th>Where can I find the resources I need?</th>
<th>Dates I will study the content</th>
<th>Date completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Ideas and Details</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close reading</td>
<td>Draw inferences and implications from the directly stated content of a reading selection</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Middle school English textbook</td>
<td>College library, middle school teacher</td>
<td>7/15/15</td>
<td>7/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining ideas</td>
<td>Identify summaries or paraphrases of the main idea or primary purpose of a reading selection</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Middle school English textbook</td>
<td>College library, middle school teacher</td>
<td>7/17/15</td>
<td>7/17/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining ideas</td>
<td>Identify summaries or paraphrases of the supporting ideas and specific details in a reading selection</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Middle and high school English textbook</td>
<td>College library, middle and high school teachers</td>
<td>7/20/15</td>
<td>7/21/15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Craft, Structure, and Language Skills</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpreting tone</td>
<td>Determine the author’s attitude toward material discussed in a reading selection</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Middle and high school English textbook</td>
<td>College library, middle and high school teachers</td>
<td>7/25/15</td>
<td>7/26/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of structure</td>
<td>Identify key transition words and phrases in a reading selection and how they are used</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Middle and high school English textbook, dictionary</td>
<td>College library, middle and high school teachers</td>
<td>7/25/15</td>
<td>7/27/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of structure</td>
<td>Identify how a reading selection is organized in terms of cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s purpose</td>
<td>Determine the role that an idea, reference, or piece of information plays in an author’s discussion or argument</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content covered</th>
<th>Description of content</th>
<th>How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)</th>
<th>What resources do I have/need for the content?</th>
<th>Where can I find the resources I need?</th>
<th>Dates I will study the content</th>
<th>Date completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language in different contexts</td>
<td>Determine whether information presented in a reading selection is presented as fact or opinion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contextual meaning</td>
<td>Identify the meanings of words as they are used in the context of a reading selection</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figurative language</td>
<td>Understand figurative language and nuances in word meanings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/8/15</td>
<td>8/8/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary range</td>
<td>Understand a range of words and phrases sufficient for reading at the college and career readiness level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/15/15</td>
<td>8/17/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diverse media and formats</td>
<td>Analyze content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/22/15</td>
<td>8/24/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of arguments</td>
<td>Identify the relationship among ideas presented in a reading selection</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/24/15</td>
<td>8/24/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of arguments</td>
<td>Determine whether evidence strengthens, weakens, or is relevant to the arguments in a reading selection</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/27/15</td>
<td>8/27/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of arguments</td>
<td>Determine the logical assumptions upon which an argument or conclusion is based</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/28/15</td>
<td>8/30/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of arguments</td>
<td>Draw conclusions from material presented in a reading selection</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/30/15</td>
<td>8/31/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparison of texts</td>
<td>Recognize or predict ideas or situations that are extensions of or similar to what has been presented in a reading selection</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>9/3/15</td>
<td>9/4/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparison of texts</td>
<td>Apply ideas presented in a reading selection to other situations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>9/5/15</td>
<td>9/6/15</td>
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</table>
**My Study Plan**

Use this worksheet to:
1. Define Content Areas: List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. Determine Strengths and Weaknesses: Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. Identify Resources: Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. Study: Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

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6. Review Study Topics

*Review study topics with questions for discussion*

**Using the Study Topics That Follow**

The Reading for Virginia Educators: Reading Specialist test is designed to measure the knowledge and skills necessary for a beginning teacher.

This chapter is intended to help you organize your preparation for the test and to give you a clear indication of the depth and breadth of the knowledge required for success on the test.

Virtually all accredited programs address the topics covered by the test; however, you are not expected to be an expert on all aspects of the topics that follow.

You are likely to find that the topics that follow are covered by most introductory textbooks. Consult materials and resources, including lecture and laboratory notes, from all your coursework. You should be able to match up specific topics and subtopics with what you have covered in your courses.

Try not to be overwhelmed by the volume and scope of content knowledge in this guide. Although a specific term may not seem familiar as you see it here, you might find you can understand it when applied to a real-life situation. Many of the items on the actual test will provide you with a context to apply to these topics or terms.

**Discussion Areas**

Interspersed throughout the study topics are discussion areas, presented as open-ended questions or statements. These discussion areas are intended to help test your knowledge of fundamental concepts and your ability to apply those concepts to situations in the classroom or the real world. Most of the areas require you to combine several pieces of knowledge to formulate an integrated understanding and response. If you spend time on these areas, you will gain increased understanding and facility with the subject matter covered on the test. You may want to discuss these areas and your answers with a teacher or mentor.

Note that this study companion *does not provide answers for the discussion area questions*, but thinking about the answers to them will help improve your understanding of fundamental concepts and will probably help you answer a broad range of questions on the test.
### Study Topics

An overview of the areas covered on the test, along with their subareas, follows.

#### I. Assessment and Diagnostic Teaching

**A. Understand the characteristics and uses of assessment and screening measures for evaluating students' language proficiency and reading skills**

1. Distinguish between formal and informal assessment and screening measures to evaluate students' oral and written language proficiency
2. Distinguish between formal and informal assessments and screening measures to evaluate emergent readers' and beginning readers' knowledge and skills; e.g., concepts of print, phonemic awareness, letter recognition, sound-symbol knowledge, single-word recognition, and decoding
3. Distinguish between formal and informal assessments and screening measures for monitoring the ongoing development of students' reading skills and strategies; e.g., word-attack skills, vocabulary, word recognition in context, reading fluency, and oral and silent reading comprehension

**B. Understand the use of assessment data to plan reading instruction**

1. Describe methods for using assessment data to diagnose the reading needs of, and tailor instruction for, individual students
2. Describe methods for using diagnostic reading data to differentiate instruction to accelerate the development of students' reading skills
3. Describe methods for using diagnostic reading data to differentiate instruction to address the needs of students with reading difficulties
4. Describe the uses of flexible groupings in instruction to address students' changing reading needs

**Discussion areas: Assessment and Diagnostic Teaching**

- What is the primary purpose of each of the following in the area of reading: formal assessments (for example, norm-referenced, criterion-referenced), informal assessments (informal reading inventories), and screening measures?
- What are the differences between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments?
- What types of information can be obtained from an informal reading inventory?
- What informal assessments best provide teachers with information about a student's oral and written language proficiency?
- What are the purposes of formal assessments? How do they help teachers evaluate a student's reading development and monitor a student's progress throughout the year?
- What assessments are used to check phonemic awareness, concepts of print, comprehension, and fluency?
- What types of instructional decisions might a teacher make based on student assessment data?
- How and why should assessment data be used to inform instructional groupings?
- What is flexible grouping, and what are the benefits of implementing it in a classroom setting?
- How does analyzing data from types of reading diagnostic assessments help teachers differentiate instruction and support a student's needs and reading development?
II. Oral Language and Oral Communication

A. Understand the development of oral language and oral communication skills

1. Explain appropriate instructional strategies to promote growth in students’ use of oral language, to develop their listening and speaking skills, and to expand their listening and speaking vocabularies

2. Explain appropriate instructional strategies to build students’ oral communication skills, to help students use oral language for different purposes, and to facilitate the use of oral language for critical thinking and creative expression

3. Explain appropriate instructional strategies to promote students’ use of oral and nonverbal communication skills in various settings, including group activities and oral presentations

4. Explain appropriate instructional strategies to promote students’ understanding of oral language structures

5. Explain appropriate, effective methods for facilitating the learning of Standard American English by speakers of other languages and dialects

6. Explain the relationship between the complex nature of language acquisition and the unique needs of students with language delays and disorders

7. Explain how to create a learning environment that is respectful of, and responsive to, linguistic and cultural diversity

B. Understand the development of phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness

1. Describe phonological awareness and effective instructional strategies for promoting students’ phonological association skills

2. Describe phonemic awareness and the role of phonemic awareness in reading development

3. Differentiate types of phonemic awareness skills; e.g., phoneme isolation, identity, categorization, blending, segmentation, deletion, addition, and substitution

4. Describe instructional strategies to promote development of phonemic awareness skills by helping students hear, say, and manipulate phonemes in spoken words containing one or more syllables

Discussion areas: Oral Language and Oral Communication

- What are the typical learning needs of speakers of other languages?

- What are examples of teaching methods that can help address the needs of speakers of other languages?

- What are examples of teaching methods that can be used to promote student growth in each of the following areas: oral language skills, listening and speaking skills, and listening and speaking vocabularies?

- What types of oral communication strategies can teachers incorporate within their reading instruction to increase students’ listening and speaking vocabularies?

- Describe three or more strategies teachers can use to facilitate the language acquisition process of English-language learners?

- How would you decide what types of strategies to implement for teaching students with a language delay or disorder?

- What is the relationship between phonological awareness and phonemic awareness?

- Why is phonemic awareness important for a child’s early reading development?

- What is the most developmentally appropriate sequence for teaching phonemic awareness skills?

- Why is phonological awareness instruction essential to students’ reading development? How long should a teacher spend each day teaching phonological awareness skills? Why?
III. Reading Development

A. Understand how to promote students’ understanding of concepts of print and basic phonetic principles

1. Describe instructional strategies for helping students learn concepts of print and for beginning to match voice with print
2. Describe ways to promote students’ automatic recognition of high-frequency sight words
3. Describe ways to help students recognize and name uppercase and lowercase letters
4. Describe instructional strategies to promote students’ understanding of basic phonetic principles by helping students grasp the alphabetic principle, match consonant sounds and short vowel sounds to appropriate letters, and identify beginning consonant sounds in single-syllable printed words
5. Explain the relationship between students’ invented spellings and their understanding of phonetic principles

B. Understand explicit, systematic phonics instruction

1. Describe basic phonic elements
2. Describe explicit instructional strategies for helping beginning readers blend consonant and vowel sounds to decode single-syllable words with regular spellings
3. Describe explicit instructional strategies for helping beginning readers recognize common consonant-vowel patterns and for applying knowledge of these patterns to read single-syllable words and decode unfamiliar words through analogy with known words containing familiar patterns
4. Describe explicit instructional strategies for developing and reinforcing students’ skills in using phonics to decode multisyllabic words and read words containing consonant blends, consonant digraphs, vowel combinations, and r-controlled vowels

C. Understand word-analysis skills and vocabulary development

1. Describe the way phonics, syntax, and semantics interact as the reader constructs meaning
2. Describe methods for improving students’ reading proficiency by helping students apply word-analysis skills and word-attack strategies
3. Describe instructional strategies for helping students read unfamiliar multisyllabic words, including compound words, by using syllabication and structural analysis to identify common spelling patterns and morphemes within the words
4. Describe instructional strategies for helping students use context, including sentence structure as well as meaning clues, to identify unfamiliar words and technical terms, to determine the relevant meaning of a word with multiple meanings, and to verify the relevant meaning and/or pronunciation of a homonym or homograph
5. Demonstrate advanced knowledge of instructional strategies for building and extending vocabulary knowledge
6. Describe instructional strategies for helping students make effective use of a dictionary, thesaurus, glossary, or other word-reference materials to clarify understanding of a word’s denotative and connotative meanings

D. Understand the development of reading fluency and reading comprehension

1. Describe the role and importance of automatic word recognition
2. Describe instructional strategies for promoting development of students’ reading fluency
3. Differentiate the linguistic, sociological, cultural, cognitive, and psychological bases of the reading process and how they influence students’ reading comprehension
4. Differentiate literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension
5. Describe ways to help students apply comprehension strategies before reading, during reading, and after reading
6. Explain the importance of independent reading in the development of reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge
7. Explain ways to promote independent reading and family and community involvement in literacy activities
E. Understand reading comprehension strategies for fiction and poetry

1. Explain how to select a wide variety of literature at appropriate reading levels to encourage independent and reflective reading and to promote students’ comprehension and enjoyment of, and appreciation for, fiction and poetry
2. Describe instructional strategies to help students comprehend fiction by identifying basic story elements, retelling familiar stories, and making predictions based on information and pictures in the text
3. Describe different genres and types of literature and use this knowledge to improve students’ comprehension
4. Identify instructional strategies to help students recognize different genres and types of literature
5. Describe ways to strengthen students’ comprehension by developing their literary response and analysis skills

F. Understand reading comprehension strategies for nonfiction

1. Describe how to select and use a variety of informational, descriptive, and persuasive materials at appropriate reading levels to promote students’ comprehension of nonfiction, including content-area texts
2. Describe instructional strategies to help students distinguish main ideas and supporting details in a nonfiction text and to identify the author’s purpose
3. Describe how to use a variety of comprehension strategies to clarify understanding of a text
4. Describe instructional strategies to promote students’ comprehension by helping them identify logical organization and recognize structural patterns in nonfiction text
5. Describe instructional strategies for helping students locate and use evidence from a nonfiction text to support their predictions, opinions, and conclusions

Discussion areas: Reading Development

- What are concepts of print, and why are they important for a child’s early reading development?
- What is automaticity, and why is it important for developing letter and word recognition?
- What are examples of evidence-based instructional strategies for promoting basic phonetic principles?
- What research-based strategies would you suggest to a teacher who is about to begin teaching the alphabetic principle to students in kindergarten? Explain your reasoning.
- Why should teachers encourage students to use invented spelling when writing?
- What are examples of consonant blends and consonant digraphs, and why should they be taught differently than other types of letter combinations?
- What are examples of vowel diphthongs, vowel digraphs, and other vowel pairs, and why is it important to teach students to sound these letters out as pairs rather than individual letters?
- Current research suggests that phonics instruction must be explicit and systematic.
- What steps must a teacher take to ensure that phonics instruction is explicit and systematic?
- What are the elements of explicit phonics instruction, and in which order should those components be instructed? Why?
- What types of strategies should a teacher employ with students who are experiencing difficulties decoding words when reading orally?
- How do phonics, syntax, and semantics help students construct meanings of words?
- What are examples of evidence-based teaching methods that can help students improve in phonics, syntax, and semantics?
- When is it appropriate to encourage students to utilize reference materials?
- Why do researchers suggest that copying definitions from a dictionary is not an effective strategy for learning vocabulary?
- When is the most appropriate time during a lesson for a teacher to teach vocabulary skills?
Step 6: Review Study Topics

- What types of strategies would be best to implement for a student who is unable to show mastery of the vocabulary words within a unit of study?

- What are the important characteristics of teaching reading comprehension strategies?

- What are examples of evidence-based instructional strategies that can benefit students before, during, and after reading?

- How can identification of a student’s independent reading level be used to promote independent reading at school and at home?

- Define the following types of comprehension: literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension. Which of these types of comprehension skills is most important for a student to acquire? Explain.

- What are the comprehension strategies that teachers can incorporate before reading a story to the class, while reading the story, and after reading the story.

- Why is participation in independent reading important for students? How can families and communities get involved and support reading practices inside and outside of schools?

- What are different types of genres of fictional text? Why are genres important to teach to students?

- What are the basic story elements of narrative text, and what teaching methods can be used to help students recognize these elements?

- What are examples of evidence-based instructional strategies that help students understand fictional text?

- List and define the different types of literature genres that elementary students must understand.

- Poetry is a difficult genre for students to comprehend. What strategies can a teacher incorporate within his or her reading instruction to help students understand poetry?

- Why should teachers utilize graphic organizers when teaching story elements?

- What are three characteristics of nonfiction text that make it more challenging for students than fictional narrative text?

- What text structures are commonly found in nonfiction text, and what teaching methods can be used to help students recognize the structural patterns?

- What are examples of evidence-based instructional strategies that can be taught to help students understand nonfiction text?

- What types of strategies can teachers implement to increase students’ comprehension of nonfiction texts?

- What steps should a teacher follow when selecting a nonfiction passage for students to read to ensure that the passage is at the appropriate reading level for the students? Why is that important?

- Reading a textbook can be difficult for struggling readers. What strategies can a teacher model and scaffold to facilitate textbook reading for struggling readers?
IV. Writing and Research

A. Understand writing skills and processes
1. Describe writing as a developmental process
2. Describe how to write in various forms and for various audiences and purposes
3. Describe strategies for promoting students' writing skills
4. Describe the recursive stages in the writing process and appropriate strategies for conferencing with students to provide effective feedback during all phases of writing
5. Describe the characteristics of effective composing
6. Describe the principles of effective written expression
7. Describe the interdependence of reading and writing development and the role of writing activities in promoting reading comprehension

B. Understand how to promote students' knowledge of correct spelling, usage, and other writing mechanics
1. Describe spelling as a developmental process
2. Describe systematic spelling instruction, including strategies for helping students recognize common orthographic patterns and strategies for helping students generalize spelling knowledge by transferring what they learn in spelling lessons to their own writing
3. Describe appropriate instructional strategies for promoting students' knowledge and use of writing mechanics, including correct usage, punctuation, and capitalization

C. Understand writing and reading as tools for inquiry and research
1. Describe ways to promote students' research skills by helping students apply effective reading techniques and writing techniques to locate, organize, evaluate, and synthesize information from a variety of print and electronic sources
2. Describe how to help students use text organizers to locate and categorize information
3. Describe strategies for helping students make effective use of reference materials
4. Describe how to promote students' skills in using technology, including electronic media, to conduct research and create final products of research
5. Describe ways to evaluate and select a variety of media resources

Discussion areas: Writing and Research
- What is an example of an instructional strategy that can be used to help students in each of the stages of the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing)?
- What are examples of teaching methods that can help students improve in areas of effective written expression (such as using precise vocabulary, appropriate voice and tone, and variation in sentence length and structure)?
- How are writing development and reading interrelated?
- How can doing writing activities promote active reading comprehension?
- What are the characteristics of effective composing? What strategies promote effective composing skills in students' writing?
- During which stage or stages of the writing process should students participate in conferences with teachers and peers to review their writing samples?
- What types of strategies would be best for helping students apply effective reading techniques to promote research skills?
Step 6: Review Study Topics

- How can students best be instructed to use text organizers to locate and categorize information?
- What are some examples of strategies to help students make effective use of reference materials?
- What types of strategies would be best to promote students' skills in using technology to create final products of research?
- What methods can students use to evaluate and select a variety of media resources?

V. Specialized Knowledge and Leadership Skills

A. Understand specialized knowledge and skills required to perform the role of a reading specialist

1. Describe the processes involved in language acquisition in order to diagnose reading difficulties
2. Distinguish types of disabilities and their implications for literacy development and reading instruction
3. Integrate knowledge of the reading needs of high-achieving students and effective instructional strategies to challenge them at appropriate levels
4. Integrate knowledge of developmental psychology, including theories of personality and learning behaviors in relation to literacy development
5. Describe in-depth knowledge of, and respect for, the influence of cultural contexts on language and literacy development
6. Integrate knowledge of the principles of educational measurement and evaluation as they apply to reading assessment and screening
7. Apply current research and recognize exemplary practices in literacy instruction

B. Understand leadership roles of the reading specialist in organizing and supervising reading programs and promoting staff development

1. Describe strategies for planning, organizing, coordinating, and supervising the reading program within the classroom, school, or division
2. Integrate appropriate strategies for instructing and advising teachers in the skills necessary to differentiate reading instruction for all students
3. Describe ways to initiate, implement, evaluate, and participate in professional development to enhance the quality of reading instruction and address the goals of the reading program
4. Describe principles, procedures, and issues involved in designing, implementing, evaluating, and improving the reading curriculum
5. Describe strategies for selecting, organizing, and using appropriate reading materials and instructional resources, including instructional technologies, to create a learning environment that promotes students’ reading development

C. Understand strategies for communicating and collaborating with all members of the educational community to address the goals of the reading program

1. Integrate communication and facilitation skills to promote effective collaboration among colleagues, students' families, and the wider community in addressing the goals of the reading program
2. Describe how to apply techniques for consensus building and conflict resolution to facilitate communication about issues relating to the reading program
3. Describe how to interpret and communicate to colleagues and other members of the educational community relevant research findings about reading and their implications for reading instruction
4. Describe how to help advocate for public support of reading education by communicating effectively with policymakers, the media, and the general public
5. Describe strategies for developing effective partnerships between schools and community agencies to help address reading goals
Discussion areas: Specialized Knowledge and Leadership Skills

- What are the processes involved in language acquisition that are relevant to the diagnosis of reading difficulties?
- Explain types of disabilities and their implications for literacy development and reading instruction.
- What strategies are best for meeting the needs and challenging high-achieving students?
- Explain the relationship between literacy development and theories of personality and learning behaviors.
- What is the influence of cultural contexts on language and literacy development?
- What are the principles of educational measurement that apply to reading assessment and screening?
- What is the relationship between current reading research and exemplary practices in literacy instruction?
- What strategies are best for planning, organizing, coordinating, and supervising the reading program within a school?
- What strategies are most effective for instructing and advising teachers in the skills necessary to differentiate reading instruction?
- What strategies are best to initiate, implement, evaluate, and participate in professional development to enhance the quality of reading instruction?
- What principles, procedures, and issues are most involved in designing, implementing, evaluating, and improving the reading curriculum?
- What strategies are most effective for selecting, organizing, and using appropriate reading materials and instructional resources to create a learning environment that promotes students’ reading development?

VI. Analysis and Integration

A. Apply knowledge of the elements of reading, reading instruction, and leadership skills to prepare an organized written response to a constructed-response question

B. Apply knowledge of reading assessment and instruction to prepare an organized written response to a case study of an elementary school student
7. Review Smart Tips for Success

Follow test-taking tips developed by experts

Learn from the experts. Take advantage of the following answers to questions you may have and practical tips to help you navigate the Praxis test and make the best use of your time.

Should I guess?

Yes. Your score is based on the number of questions you answer correctly, with no penalty or subtraction for an incorrect answer. When you don’t know the answer to a question, try to eliminate any obviously wrong answers and then guess at the correct one. Try to pace yourself so that you have enough time to carefully consider every question.

Can I answer the questions in any order?

You can answer the questions in order or skip questions and come back to them later. If you skip a question, you can also mark it so that you can remember to return and answer it later. Remember that questions left unanswered are treated the same as questions answered incorrectly, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.

Are there trick questions on the test?

No. There are no hidden meanings or trick questions. All of the questions on the test ask about subject matter knowledge in a straightforward manner.

Are there answer patterns on the test?

No. You might have heard this myth: the answers on tests follow patterns. Another myth is that there will never be more than two questions in a row with the correct answer in the same position among the choices. Neither myth is true. Select the answer you think is correct based on your knowledge of the subject.

Can I write on the scratch paper I am given?

Yes. You can work out problems on the scratch paper, make notes to yourself, or write anything at all. Your scratch paper will be destroyed after you are finished with it, so use it in any way that is helpful to you. But make sure to select or enter your answers on the computer.

Smart Tips for Taking the Test

1. Skip the questions you find extremely difficult. Rather than trying to answer these on your first pass through the test, you may want to leave them blank and mark them so that you can return to them later. Pay attention to the time as you answer the rest of the questions on the test, and try to finish with 10 or 15 minutes remaining so that you can go back over the questions you left blank. Even if you don’t know the answer the second time you read the questions, see if you can narrow down the possible answers, and then guess. Your score is based on the number of right answers, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.
2. **Keep track of the time.** The on-screen clock will tell you how much time you have left. You will probably have plenty of time to answer all of the questions, but if you find yourself becoming bogged down, you might decide to move on and come back to any unanswered questions later.

3. **Read all of the possible answers before selecting one.** For questions that require you to select more than one answer, or to make another kind of selection, consider the most likely answers given what the question is asking. Then reread the question to be sure the answer(s) you have given really answer the question. Remember, a question that contains a phrase such as “Which of the following does NOT …” is asking for the one answer that is NOT a correct statement or conclusion.

4. **Check your answers.** If you have extra time left over at the end of the test, look over each question and make sure that you have answered it as you intended. Many test takers make careless mistakes that they could have corrected if they had checked their answers.

5. **Don’t worry about your score when you are taking the test.** No one is expected to answer all of the questions correctly. Your score on this test is not analogous to your score on the *GRE*® or other tests. It doesn’t matter on the Praxis tests whether you score very high or barely pass. If you meet the minimum passing scores for your state and you meet the state’s other requirements for obtaining a teaching license, you will receive a license. In other words, what matters is meeting the minimum passing score. You can find passing scores for all states that use the Praxis tests at [http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/passing_scores.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/passing_scores.pdf) or on the web site of the state for which you are seeking certification/licensure.

6. **Use your energy to take the test, not to get frustrated by it.** Getting frustrated only increases stress and decreases the likelihood that you will do your best. Highly qualified educators and test development professionals, all with backgrounds in teaching, worked diligently to make the test a fair and valid measure of your knowledge and skills. Your state painstakingly reviewed the test before adopting it as a licensure requirement. The best thing to do is concentrate on answering the questions.
8. Check on Testing Accommodations

See if you qualify for accommodations that may make it easier to take the Praxis test

What if English is not my primary language?

Praxis tests are given only in English. If your primary language is not English (PLNE), you may be eligible for extended testing time. For more details, visit www.ets.org/praxis/register/plne_accommodations.

What if I have a disability or other health-related need?

The following accommodations are available for Praxis test takers who meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act disability requirements:

- Extended testing time
- Additional rest breaks
- Separate testing room
- Writer/recorder of answers
- Test reader
- Sign language interpreter for spoken directions only
- Perkins Brailler
- Braille slate and stylus
- Printed copy of spoken directions
- Oral interpreter
- Audio test
- Braille test
- Large print test book
- Large print answer sheet
- Listening section omitted

For more information on these accommodations, visit www.ets.org/praxis/register/disabilities.

Note: Test takers who have health-related needs requiring them to bring equipment, beverages, or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks must request these accommodations by following the procedures described in the Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-Related Needs (PDF), which can be found at http://www.ets.org/s/disabilities/pdf/bulletin_supplement_test_takers_with_disabilities_health_needs.pdf.

You can find additional information on available resources for test takers with disabilities or health-related needs at www.ets.org/disabilities.
9. Do Your Best on Test Day

Get ready for test day so you will be calm and confident

You followed your study plan. You prepared for the test. Now it’s time to prepare for test day.

Plan to end your review a day or two before the actual test date so you avoid cramming. Take a dry run to the test center so you’re sure of the route, traffic conditions, and parking. Most of all, you want to eliminate any unexpected factors that could distract you from your ultimate goal—passing the Praxis test!

On the day of the test, you should:

- be well rested
- wear comfortable clothes and dress in layers
- eat before you take the test
- bring an acceptable and valid photo identification with you
- bring an approved calculator only if one is specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators)
- be prepared to stand in line to check in or to wait while other test takers check in

You can’t control the testing situation, but you can control yourself. Stay calm. The supervisors are well trained and make every effort to provide uniform testing conditions, but don’t let it bother you if the test doesn’t start exactly on time. You will have the allotted amount of time once it does start.

You can think of preparing for this test as training for an athletic event. Once you’ve trained, prepared, and rested, give it everything you’ve got.

What items am I restricted from bringing into the test center?

You cannot bring into the test center personal items such as:

- handbags, knapsacks, or briefcases
- water bottles or canned or bottled beverages
- study materials, books, or notes
- pens, pencils, scrap paper, or calculators, unless specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators)
- any electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices

Personal items are not allowed in the testing room and will not be available to you during the test or during breaks. You may also be asked to empty your pockets. At some centers, you will be assigned a space to store your belongings, such as handbags and study materials. Some centers do not have secure storage space available, so please plan accordingly.

Test centers assume no responsibility for your personal items.
Step 9: Do Your Best on Test Day

If you have health-related needs requiring you to bring equipment, beverages or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks, you need to request accommodations in advance. Procedures for requesting accommodations are described in the Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-related Needs (PDF).

Note: All cell phones, smart phones (e.g., Android® devices, iPhones®, etc.), and other electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices are strictly prohibited from the test center. If you are seen with such a device, you will be dismissed from the test, your test scores will be canceled, and you will forfeit your test fees. If you are seen using such a device, the device will be confiscated and inspected. For more information on what you can bring to the test center, visit www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/bring.

Are You Ready?
Complete this checklist to determine whether you are ready to take your test.

❑ Do you know the testing requirements for the license or certification you are seeking in the state(s) where you plan to teach?
❑ Have you followed all of the test registration procedures?
❑ Do you know the topics that will be covered in each test you plan to take?
❑ Have you reviewed any textbooks, class notes, and course readings that relate to the topics covered?
❑ Do you know how long the test will take and the number of questions it contains?
❑ Have you considered how you will pace your work?
❑ Are you familiar with the types of questions for your test?
❑ Are you familiar with the recommended test-taking strategies?
❑ Have you practiced by working through the practice questions in this study companion or in a study guide or practice test?
❑ If constructed-response questions are part of your test, do you understand the scoring criteria for these questions?
❑ If you are repeating a Praxis test, have you analyzed your previous score report to determine areas where additional study and test preparation could be useful?

If you answered "yes" to the questions above, your preparation has paid off. Now take the Praxis test, do your best, pass it—and begin your teaching career!
10. Understand Your Scores

Understand how tests are scored and how to interpret your test scores

Of course, passing the Praxis test is important to you so you need to understand what your scores mean and what your state requirements are.

What are the score requirements for my state?
States, institutions, and associations that require the tests set their own passing scores. Visit www.ets.org/praxis/states for the most up-to-date information.

If I move to another state, will my new state accept my scores?
The Praxis tests are part of a national testing program, meaning that they are required in many states for licensure. The advantage of a national program is that if you move to another state that also requires Praxis tests, you can transfer your scores. Each state has specific test requirements and passing scores, which you can find at www.ets.org/praxis/states.

How do I know whether I passed the test?
Your score report will include information on passing scores for the states you identified as recipients of your test results. If you test in a state with automatic score reporting, you will also receive passing score information for that state.

A list of states and their passing scores for each test are available online at www.ets.org/praxis/states.

What your Praxis scores mean
You received your score report. Now what does it mean? It’s important to interpret your score report correctly and to know what to do if you have questions about your scores.

To access Understanding Your Praxis Scores, a document that provides additional information on how to read your score report, visit www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand.

Put your scores in perspective
Your score report indicates:

- Your score and whether you passed
- The range of possible scores
- The raw points available in each content category
- The range of the middle 50 percent of scores on the test

If you have taken the same Praxis test or other Praxis tests in the last 10 years, your score report also lists the highest score you earned on each test taken.
Content category scores and score interpretation

Questions on the Praxis tests are categorized by content. To help you in future study or in preparing to retake the test, your score report shows how many raw points you earned in each content category. Compare your “raw points earned” with the maximum points you could have earned (“raw points available”). The greater the difference, the greater the opportunity to improve your score by further study.

Score scale changes

ETS updates Praxis tests on a regular basis to ensure they accurately measure the knowledge and skills that are required for licensure. When tests are updated, the meaning of the score scale may change, so requirements may vary between the new and previous versions. All scores for previous, discontinued tests are valid and reportable for 10 years, provided that your state or licensing agency still accepts them.

These resources may also help you interpret your scores:

- Understanding Your Praxis Scores (PDF), found at www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand
- The Praxis Passing Scores (PDF), found at www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand
- State requirements, found at www.ets.org/praxis/states
Appendix: Other Questions You May Have

Here is some supplemental information that can give you a better understanding of the Praxis tests.

What do the Praxis tests measure?
The Praxis tests measure the specific knowledge and skills that beginning teachers need. The tests do not measure an individual’s disposition toward teaching or potential for success, nor do they measure your actual teaching ability. The assessments are designed to be comprehensive and inclusive but are limited to what can be covered in a finite number of questions and question types. Teaching requires many complex skills that are typically measured in other ways, including classroom observation, video recordings, and portfolios.

Ranging from Agriculture to World Languages, there are more than 80 Praxis tests, which contain selected-response questions or constructed-response questions, or a combination of both.

Who takes the tests and why?
Some colleges and universities use the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators tests (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) to evaluate individuals for entry into teacher education programs. The assessments are generally taken early in your college career. Many states also require Core Academic Skills test scores as part of their teacher licensing process.

Individuals entering the teaching profession take the Praxis content and pedagogy tests as part of the teacher licensing and certification process required by many states. In addition, some professional associations and organizations require Praxis Subject Assessments for professional licensing.

Do all states require these tests?
The Praxis tests are currently required for teacher licensure in approximately 40 states and United States territories. These tests are also used by several professional licensing agencies and by several hundred colleges and universities. Teacher candidates can test in one state and submit their scores in any other state that requires Praxis testing for licensure. You can find details at www.ets.org/praxis/states.

What is licensure/certification?
Licensure in any area—medicine, law, architecture, accounting, cosmetology—is an assurance to the public that the person holding the license possesses sufficient knowledge and skills to perform important occupational activities safely and effectively. In the case of teacher licensing, a license tells the public that the individual has met predefined competency standards for beginning teaching practice.

Because a license makes such a serious claim about its holder, licensure tests are usually quite demanding. In some fields, licensure tests have more than one part and last for more than one day. Candidates for licensure in all fields plan intensive study as part of their professional preparation. Some join study groups, others study alone. But preparing to take a licensure test is, in all cases, a professional activity. Because a licensure exam surveys a broad body of knowledge, preparing for a licensure exam takes planning, discipline, and sustained effort.

Why does my state require the Praxis tests?
Your state chose the Praxis tests because they assess the breadth and depth of content—called the “domain”—that your state wants its teachers to possess before they begin to teach. The level of content knowledge, reflected in the passing score, is based on recommendations of panels of teachers and teacher educators in
The Praxis® Study Companion

Appendix: Other Questions You May Have

Each subject area. The state licensing agency and, in some states, the state legislature ratify the passing scores that have been recommended by panels of teachers.

How were the tests developed?

ETS consulted with practicing teachers and teacher educators around the country during every step of the Praxis test development process. First, ETS asked them what knowledge and skills a beginning teacher needs to be effective. Their responses were then ranked in order of importance and reviewed by hundreds of teachers.

After the results were analyzed and consensus was reached, guidelines, or specifications, for the selected-response and constructed-response tests were developed by teachers and teacher educators. Following these guidelines, teachers and professional test developers created test questions that met content requirements and ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness.*

When your state adopted the research-based Praxis tests, local panels of teachers and teacher educators evaluated each question for its relevance to beginning teachers in your state. During this “validity study,” the panel also provided a passing-score recommendation based on how many of the test questions a beginning teacher in your state would be able to answer correctly. Your state's licensing agency determined the final passing-score requirement.

ETS follows well-established industry procedures and standards designed to ensure that the tests measure what they are intended to measure. When you pass the Praxis tests your state requires, you are proving that you have the knowledge and skills you need to begin your teaching career.

How are the tests updated to ensure the content remains current?

Praxis tests are reviewed regularly. During the first phase of review, ETS conducts an analysis of relevant state and association standards and of the current test content. State licensure titles and the results of relevant job analyses are also considered. Revised test questions are then produced following the standard test development methodology. National advisory committees may also be convened to review and revise existing test specifications and to evaluate test forms for alignment with the specifications.

How long will it take to receive my scores?

Scores for tests that do not include constructed-response questions are available on screen immediately after the test. Scores for tests that contain constructed-response questions or essays aren't available immediately after the test because of the scoring process involved. Official score reports are available to you and your designated score recipients approximately two to three weeks after the test date for tests delivered continuously, or two to three weeks after the testing window closes for other tests. See the test dates and deadlines calendar at www.ets.org/praxis/register/centers_dates for exact score reporting dates.

Can I access my scores on the web?

All test takers can access their test scores via My Praxis Account free of charge for one year from the posting date. This online access replaces the mailing of a paper score report.

The process is easy—simply log into My Praxis Account at www.ets.org/praxis and click on your score report. If you do not already have a Praxis account, you must create one to view your scores.

Note: You must create a Praxis account to access your scores, even if you registered by mail or phone.

Your teaching career is worth preparing for, so start today!
Let the Praxis Study Companion guide you.

To search for the Praxis test prep resources that meet your specific needs, visit:

www.ets.org/praxis/testprep

To purchase official test prep made by the creators of the Praxis tests, visit the ETS Store:

www.ets.org/praxis/store

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